Bimonthly Records and Information Discussion Group (BRIDG) Meeting Summary
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., April 23, 2002
USDA Jefferson Auditorium
TOPIC: Records Management Applications: Needs Analysis and Lessons Learned

Approximately 60 people attended the latest BRIDG meeting on April 23, 2002. Michael Miller welcomed everyone and gave a special thanks to Bette Fugitt and USDA for hosting the meeting. The topic for this BRIDG meeting was the experiences of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and NARA with Records Management Applications. Susan Sallaway, Electronic Records Specialist from OCC and Richard Marcus, NARA Records Officer, were the speakers.

Susan Sallaway - OCC Needs Analysis

Approximately 10 months ago, Susan Sallaway left NARA to work at the Comptroller of the Currency. Her first project was to conduct a study of the current records management program at OCC, and determine if OCC needed to implement an electronic records management system.

Ms. Sallaway described the OCC records management environment to set the stage for her discussion. OCC has a very strong records management program already in place. Sherry Smith, the OCC Records Officer, has a good relationship with higher levels of the agency, and is able to accomplish many goals of her RM program. The staff and customers of OCC are technologically savvy, work processes are currently under modernization, and OCC is already using a quasi-document management system for some of the bank examination information.

The Needs Analysis at OCC involved looking at the current RM program to assess how records are captured and managed. Is anything falling through the cracks? Is the program ready for the transition to an electronic management system? If an RMA is implemented, what first steps need to be accomplished to ease the transition? They focused on reviewing two mission-critical systems for the study.

A cross-functional team was assembled to assist in the project planning. Money was also needed and OCC estimated it would cost approximately $100,000 - $150,000. OCC hired Millican and Associates to provide a professional, independent and expert view and to study whether an RMA was necessary, and if so, how to smooth the transition to electronic recordkeeping.

There were many discussions while attempting to develop a methodology for the Needs Analysis. At first, OCC and the consultant disagreed on how to implement a potential RMA because Millican felt that OCC should start with email management, while OCC did not. Both OCC and the consultant learned a great deal from this project. As part of the Needs Analysis, a strategy for short, middle and long term goals were also developed.

The second step of the Needs Analysis was to determine what would it take to successfully implement an RMA. The RM program would need to work within the agency to increase education and awareness of records management across the staff. This study required a full-time effort from Susan and approximately half-time help from the records officer.

The consultant was tasked with looking at current electronic records management practices and compare that with the ideal state or best case scenario for the agency. Gaps in these two areas were then identified. The consultant also reviewed OCC's strategic plan, current policies, websites, training programs, etc. OCC wanted the focus the study on mission critical records, and therefore identified for the contractor the systems to be analyzed. All of this work again required cooperation between the RM staff and the consultants.

The next step was to interview OCC staff. All the most important departments of the agency were represented in this process. Individuals were invited to participate in the study from the legal department, IT staff, and program area staff. By inviting a variety of high-level individuals to participate, OCC hoped to solicit a variety of ideas as well as to create a buzz around the agency about the project. As more management staff talked about the RM Program, Susan and Sherry hoped to build consensus throughout the agency. By the time the project was ready to begin, staff were ready and willing to participate in the study.

Over 50 key staff members were interviewed in headquarters and in the field. Interviews were held both with large groups and individuals. Two sets of questions were developed. The first set focused on how work is accomplished. Questions were asked such as: How is work accomplished? Where do you file? Where is the information that you use generated? Is there any public access to this information? Is this information subject to FOIA?

The second set of questions focused specifically on bank examination records: What percentage of your records should be filed in the National Filing System (NFS)? What percentage is actually filed? Do you know what should be filed, and are you following current policy? Interviews were one hour each, and were all completed in approximately three months. It took the consultants another three months to compile all of the information and write and review the deliverables.

At the end of six months, the OCC had a number of products to review, including the Needs Analysis report and the Gap Analysis. The contractor also developed policy and procedure recommendations and software selection requirements and criteria that would meet OCC needs. The overall findings of the consultant was that the OCC's records management program was sound, but that the current "print and file policy" was not adequate for their long term electronic recordkeeping goals.

Since the end of the Needs Analysis project, OCC has held internal and external briefings to educate, increase awareness, and build consensus as they begin to plan an RMA pilot. They have submitted a budget request, developed the business case, hosted several product demonstrations to introduce the technology, and worked on developing an audit program, a training program, and risk methodology. They have also begun the process to assess current retentions on some schedules and discuss limiting document formats and applying standards. Additionally, OCC is working hard to connect and share information with other agency folks who have tried or are trying to implement an RMA, as well as continuing to work closely with their program folks, the Legal department, and IT staff.

Richard Marcus - NARA's RMA 2000 Project

NARA began its RMA pilot program as a test. It was not meant to be a full implementation of an RMA program, due to the lack of experience of NARA staff with using and implementing an RMA system. The goal was to conduct this pilot with specific staff and offices, and then make a decision on implementing an RMA across NARA, based on the experiences and findings of the pilot. The main goal of the pilot was to gain experience, and to learn enough about the system to support a decision on an agency-wide implementation in the future. While conducting this test, NARA staff continued to file hard copies of their records according to the file plan. The electronic filing was conducted only as a test, and was not meant to replace the hard copy recordkeeping practices.

The pilot project included 30 end users from 7 different offices, including the Deputy Archivist, General Counsel, CIO, Regional Archives headquarters, and staff from the Modern Records Program. The pilot focused on records produced in the Microsoft Office 97 suite (Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point and GroupWise Email). The pilot did not include databases. Planning for the pilot took a great deal of time. NARA staff conducted market research to determine which software package to choose. A study on how to configure current systems to ease implementation of the program was also conducted. The actual testing phase lasted six months. NARA used Foremost as its RMA product. This should not be construed as an endorsement of the product; it was chosen because Foremost was the only product available at the time which included an integrated autofile classification capability. NARA was particularly interested in testing this capability.

The results of this RMA pilot at NARA represent NARA's own experience, and do not represent any generalizations of the Foremost product or RMA programs as a whole.

There were three major Records Management "lessons learned" from the pilot:

1. The paper-based records management file plan was not appropriate for use with the RMA. NARA anticipated that the file plan currently used for paper records would work with the RMA without any adjustment. This was not the case. Granular file plans for paper records did not work well with the RMA because they are too

cumbersome. To alleviate this burden, the file plans were adapted within the RMA to include larger "buckets" which made the file plan less granular.

2. User filing is more likely to occur if filing is integrated easily with the user's work processes. If there were documents needed for part of a work process, users were more likely to file, rather than taking the time to file each individual email or Word document. This finding is not unique to NARA.

3. The amount of metadata users are required to supply should be kept to a minimum. The more fields that a user was required to complete, the less likely they were to file. NARA adapted the Foremost program to automatically enter default information into a number of metadata fields. These fields would pop up upon filing, but their contents would be filled in automatically by the system and would remain constant until changed by user input.

There were also three major IT "lessons learned":

1. The RMA program was intrusive. The program was slow and wreaked havoc with user's desktops. Each computer had to be re-baselined to accept the program. This process was slow and disruptive to work.

2. Make sure the product is DoD certified <u>for the environment you use</u>. NARA uses GroupWise for its email package, and not Microsoft Outlook. The Foremost program did not integrate well with GroupWise.

3. Don't deploy an immature product. This is particularly important in the case of autofiling. An immature product led to many delays in use and delivering results. The autofiling capability was not delivered until much later after the start of the pilot.

Project Management "lessons learned":

1. When you develop your statement of work and contracts, identify key personnel and how much knowledge the contractor is bringing to the project. In NARA's case, key contractor IT personnel left their company after a few months into the pilot. Their replacements were not as well educated on the product, NARA's system, or NARA's needs.

2. Include a performance clause in your statement of work and contract.

3. Carefully plan your product rollout! Technical problems early on led to slow and problematic rollout. This prevented everyone in the pilot from starting at the same time. The records management office should work out any problems before roll out begins.

One important factor of the NARA RMA test was the use of the "autofile" feature.   The autofile module was designed to identify a document (with no user interaction), analyze its contents, and file it in the proper electronic file folder.   For the test, however, users continued to manually file their documents as well. After its accuracy was verified, this manually filed body of records became the yardstick against which "autofiled" were compared and evaluated. "Autofile" worked in the background, therefore encouraging users to continue filing manually.

The "autofile's" confidence levels could be tuned to increase its filing accuracy. The autofiling was tested at three confidence levels– 25%, 50%, and 75%. The higher the level of confidence required, the greater level of accuracy. However, the increased level of confidence resulted in fewer documents being filed.

The NARA RMA pilot concluded with a number of findings. Implementing an RMA system is not easy. A lot of work and time must go into the implementation, including interviews, evaluating and restructuring configuration plans, and greater education of users. Finally, the biggest factor to consider when rolling out an RMA (either in pilot form as a final product) is the human element. If the product is cumbersome or distracting to use in everyday work environments, people will easily become frustrated. Individuals at higher levels will have to come to accept an

additional work burden which was once delegated to their secretaries. There needs to be a "buy-in" of all users for any RMA to be successful.

NARA Updates – Mike Miller

1. Please note that all phone numbers at Archives II have changed. The NARA website has been updated to reflect these new phone numbers.

2. NARA is the lead on the Electronic Records Management E-Gov Initiative, one of OMB's 24 E-Gov initiatives. The NARA-led initiative has four issue areas: Correspondence Management, Enterprise-wide ERM systems, tools for overcoming interoperability barriers, and transfer of permanent electronic records to NARA.

3. As part of the last issue area mentioned above, we are looking for input on improving the current status of transferring permanent electronic records to NARA. See NWM 10.2002 (http://www.nara.gov/records/nwm10-02.html) for details.

The next BRIDG meeting will be on June 18, 2002 from 10am until noon at the FDIC building at at 801 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC. Please contact Merisue D'Achille at merisue.dachille@nara.gov or 301-837-1642 if you would like to attend. We will be discussing the progress of the Transfer of Permanent Electronic Records to NARA issue area of the ERM Initiative, as well as taking your comments on how you would like to see the guidance structured when it is published for each format.